

**Statement presented at EPA hearing, April 15, 2003, Iowa City, IA**

~~Good morning~~ <sup>afternoon</sup>, my name is Peter Hansen. I am an adjunct professor in the Chemistry Department here at the University of Iowa. Thank you for allowing me to testify on environmental health issues affecting senior citizens.

I'm here today to protest the Bush Administration's new proposal that when it comes to protecting people from pollution, senior citizens aren't worth as much as young adults. According to the Bush Administration's proposal for calculating the benefits of reducing life-threatening pollution, the life of a 70-year-old is worth 37% less than that of a young adult.

Using this mathematical sleight of hand, the Bush Administration would re-write the manner by which the government calculates the value of pollution safeguards, because air-pollution filters that save lives may not be worth installing if senior citizen lives have less value.

More specifically, in the past government agencies attributed a 6.1 million-dollar value to each human life when evaluating new rules. However, the Bush Administration changed this calculation and reduced the value of a life to \$3.7 million per person, and only \$2.3 million for anyone over the age of 70. The EPA has used these new cost-benefit assumptions to justify the reduced public health protections contained in the administration's air pollution bill introduced in Congress last month. Ironically, the decision to devalue the life of a senior is based on a single 1982 study, which has since been disavowed by its author.

Lessening the value we place on human life so that polluting companies can avoid environmental safeguards is both morally and scientifically reckless. With modern technology, it's easier than ever to protect families from air pollution. So why is the Bush Administration allowing polluting corporations to rewrite environmental laws, to escape their responsibilities, and to benefit at our expense?

I like breathing clean air today as much as I did as a young man. Instead of manipulating math to make more pollution seem acceptable, the Bush Administration should make it a priority to protect the health and safety of Americans of all ages. Our grandchildren deserve clean air and so do I.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter J. Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "H".